THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) to (c) Only agencies owned by Ex-servicemen and sponsored by Director General of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence are offered transport contracts. However, in view of certain complaints received about the operation of such agencies, CIL Board has constituted a High level Committee to review engagement of Ex-servicemen Transport agencies.

EU New Barriers on Indian Rice against WTO Norms

6603. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR :
SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that European Union has imposed anti-dumping duties on Indian rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the likely impact on our export of rice to the European Union during this year and the coming years;

(d) whether the Government have taken up the matter with the European Union;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Export of Handloom and Handicrafts Items

6604. SHRI L. RAMANA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the target set for the export of handloom and handicraft items for the last three years and the extent to which the target has been achieved;

(b) the quantum of foreign exchange earned thereby during the said period;

(c) the target set for the export of the said items during 1997-98 and the quantum of foreign exchange likely to be earned there from;

(d) whether the Government propose to export these items, statewise; and

(e) if so, the action taken so far in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) and (b) The targets fixed for the exports of cotton handloom textiles and handicraft items for the last three years and the achievements against them have been as follows :

(In Million US dollars)

(Provisional)

	Cotton Handloom Textiles		Handicrafts	
Year	Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
1994-95	475	479.19	1234	1321.71
1995-96	500	448.54	1542	1497.87
1996-97	470	495.48	1600	1585.53

(c) For 1997-98, targets of US $ 520 million and US $ 1835 million have been fixed for the export of cotton handloom textiles and handicrafts respectively. The targets are likely to be achieved.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Agarbathi Industries

6605. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court has delivered an order imposing ban on bamboo felling;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether agarbathi industry is on the verge of a closure as a result thereof;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether a number of small scale agarbathi units have already been closed due to lack of bamboo slits; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government for revival of these industries ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Hon'ble Supreme Court had imposed ban on felling of trees in all forests where working plans are not approved by the Government of India as well as ban on transport of timber from seven (07) North Eastern States to the rest of the country vide their interim order dated 12th December, 1996. As bamboo is defined as a tree and cut tree is classified as timber under Indian Forest Act 1927, certain States had banned felling of bamboo and also its. transportation. However, Supreme Court in its revised order dated 4th March, 1997 clarified that directions issued vide their interim order dated 12.12.96 are not applicable to minor forest produce including bamboo.

(c) to (f) Does not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

[Translation]

Export activities of various Institutions

6606. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of activities of the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Limited, Export Promotion Council,

India Trade Promotion Organisation and Free Trade Zone working under his Ministry during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) whether the above institutions have been successful in achieving their objectives;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the financial position of the above institutions during the above period, year-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The main activities of the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Limited (ECGC) are to provide adequate export credit insurance cover to exporters, export credit guarantee to banks and investment insurance to Indian Investors with the objective to encourage and accelerate India's export performance.

The main activities of Export Promotion Councils falling under the purview of the Ministry of Commerce are to provide commercially useful information and assistance; offer professional advice in areas such as technology upgradation, quality and design improvement standards and specifications, product development, innovation, etc.; organise visits of delegations to explore overseas market opportunities; participation in trade fairs, exhibitions and buyer-seller meets in India and abroad; promote interaction between the exporting community and the Government; and to provide statistical information on trade.

The main activities of India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) are to organise trade fairs in India and Indian exhibitions abroad as also buyer-seller meets.

The main activities of Free Trade Zones which in Indian context are termed as Export Processing Zones (EPZs) are to earn foreign exchange through promotion of export oriented industries for which these zones offer basic infrastructural facilities such as ready-built factory premises, development land for construction of factory sheds and other facilities such as power, water, sewerage.

(b) These institutions have been broadly successful in achieving their main objectives.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) As is evident from the details of the activities of the organisations mentioned in Part (a) of the reply, these organisations are basically service organisations and profit making is not the objective of these organisations. Therefore, their performance cannot be judged from financial parameters alone. Moreover, EPZs, are totally Government organisations and their budget is fully met by Government's budgetary allocation. The performance of these EPZs can be considered to be quite satisfactory because the bulk of their budgetary allocation is used for creation of capital infrastracture for export production.

As regard other organisations, their financial performance have been broadly found to be satisfactory with majority of these organisations showing excess income over expenditure.

[English]

Employees of PSUs

6607. SHRI SURENDRA YADAV :
SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of employees in all the public sector industrial units as on March, 31, 1997, PSU-wise;

(b) whether there has been decline in the number of employees in these industrial units despite increase in capital investment made therein between 1991 to 1997;